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ABSTRACT

The newsletter focuses on the transition from school to work for individuals with handicaps. The changing employment scene is examined as are the implications for the education of secondary students with handicaps. Among educational implications cited are the needs for curricula in occupational survival skills and for teamwork among school personnel. The importance of interagency collaboration is emphasized. Generally low levels of hiring handicapped workers are noted, but examples of innovative approaches to expanding employment and training opportunities through interagency linkages are pointed out. Implications of the Job Partnership Training Act are briefly reviewed. Opportunities in both higher education and the arts are explored as illustrations of ways in which the gap in services can be bridged at the community level. (CL)

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Information from the National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth

September, 1983

When Handicapped Children Grow Up

This document was prepared by Dr. Judy Smith-Davis.

DURING THE TRANSITION from school to adult life, young people strive to attain the skills, understandings, and opportunities that will help them to become independent. This period of transition often brings difficulties, particularly for young people with handicaps.

The nature and degree of a handicap may assume new dimensions as adulthood nears. A blind individual who has been an academic achiever may, for example, find that blindness becomes an obstacle to employment. On the other hand, a slow learning individual who has had academic problems in school may experience no significant difficulty in adjusting to adult social, vocational, and family life situations. The influence of a handicap on one's success may change with the new situation, either positively or negatively.

Moreover, all young people with handicaps have not yet been able to participate fully in the range of experiences and opportunities that most non-handicapped youth take for granted. The integration of handicapped people in social, cultural, and community activities, vocational training, and career preparation is far from complete.

Today's handicapped youth must also face an employment situation that is more complex than that of the past. Our nation is itself in an economic-industrial transition. This unfolding process holds many changes and challenges for the entire working-age population. Its implications are of immense importance to all young people who are preparing for their own futures.

Employment in the Coming Decade

Technology is changing the nature of the workplace. As the United States shifts from manufacturing to technology as the basis for its economy, changes are occurring in employment structures and in the prevailing types of employment options that will be available. As production becomes more heavily automated, fewer production workers are needed, and the manufacturing employment market gives way to a demand for workers in technological and service industries. Whereas manufacturing has relied on large numbers of well paid production workers, a service-based economy depends on such personnel as keypunch operators, clerks, secretaries, cashiers, waiters, and the like. At the same time, many of the more lucrative production and management jobs of the 1950's and 1960's are disappearing.

According to recent forecasts by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, some 19 million new jobs are expected to be generated in this country between 1980 and 1990. Approximately 3½ million of these will be professional and technical, but low-wage service and clerical jobs will account for almost 7 million openings—or double the number of professional and technical positions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also predicts that, in this decade, the United States will need only about 12,000 more computer programmers and 125,000 more electrical engineers—but more than 3 million additional secretaries and office workers; 600,000 more janitors; 500,000 more sales clerks; and 400,000 more fast food workers. The increased demand for relatively low-paid, entry-level workers may improve the general employment picture, but these jobs offer few opportunities for advancement.

All of this suggests some decline in the overall number of workers needed, as well as a narrowing of the middle ground of jobs, as automation overtakes manufacturing as a means of production. These factors have a lot to do with the current rate of unemployment, which is exceptionally high among young people. It would also appear that competition for promising jobs will accelerate. In the face of these developments, what sort of life is ahead for young people, and what kinds of adjustments will they have to make in their expectations? These are difficult questions for an entire age group, most particularly for the handicapped individuals within it.

An Appropriate Public Education

The field of special education has traditionally spent its greatest energies on the young handicapped child, at the expense of preparing and programming for the adolescent. Only recently have public schools begun to emphasize education for handicapped students in middle schools and high schools. This progress has been brought about largely by Public Law 94-142, which guarantees each handicapped child and adolescent the right to a free, appropriate public education—an education that leads to outcomes appropriate to each student's abilities and potentials—and which establishes the right of handicapped students to an education in the skills necessary to successful adulthood, including industrial arts, consumer and homemaking education, and vocational education.

EC 161178

Both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Vocational Act of 1963, as amended in 1976, also require that handicapped individuals have opportunities to participate in such programs, and to participate in personal, academic, and vocational counseling, guidance or placement services on a nondiscriminatory basis. The ultimate purpose is to make sure that handicapped persons are prepared for and counseled toward the least restrictive adult objectives.

Although the task of developing secondary school programs for handicapped adolescents has begun, much remains to be accomplished. Meanwhile, many students who are handicapped leave school without adequate preparation for the transition to adulthood.

A five-year evaluation study mandated by the U.S. Congress and carried out by the National Institute of Education found that handicapped students in secondary schools continue to lack mastery of such basic skills as reading and arithmetic. The 1981 report of this study recommended that schools provide effective instruction in the basic skills, and that employers should undertake on-the-job training and orientation in job-specific skills.

Most educators agree that many handicapped adolescents in public schools should be prepared in occupational survival skills, which are the skills and behaviors associated with success on the job. Many also recommend that public education take a broad view of the competencies necessary for adult life. This broad view stresses a functional curriculum designed to help handicapped adolescents to learn the behaviors and skills essential to: transportation; use of the newspaper; letter writing; banking; telephone communication; budgeting; money skills; calculator math; measurement; home management; cooking; food purchase and storage; personal hygiene; leisure skills, social-sexual behavior; vocational applications; and vocational training.

Appropriate education for handicapped young people also means that classroom teachers, special educators, vocational educators, homemaking and arts teachers, parents, and other members of the educational team work cooperatively in developing and improving secondary programs. Appropriate education also means teamwork and coordination among and between the schools, the community, other service agencies, business, and industry.

Interagency Collaboration

The real transition to adulthood begins, of course, when school ends. While public education has primary responsibility for preparing young people for this transition, their continued training, counseling, support, encouragement, and development should be a cooperative effort among many local, state, and national interests. Few genuine partnerships exist, however, and the result is that handicapped young people often move from a system to a nonsystem when they leave school.

Many educational, rehabilitative, job training and employment agencies, business organizations, and community services potentially offer assistance that is valuable in preparing handicapped young people for independence or semi-independence. Unfortunately, these services are often separated and fragmented, and their full force is not combined to multiply their benefits. This kind of impact can, however, be achieved through interagency agreements and linkages that encompass the assessment of needs, program planning and development, evaluation and improvement.

Almost any person or organization can begin an interagency linkage committee. In Lexington, Kentucky, the catalyst was a group of teachers who felt that handicapped people in their school and community were underemployed and far more dependent than need be. These teachers shared their concern with vocational educators, employers, rehabilitation personnel, and work administrators. The result was cooperation which improved the vocational preparation of handicapped pupils.

In 1981, California's Employment Development Department, Department of Rehabilitation, and Department of Education joined fiscal, administrative and training resources to pursue the goal of permanent unsubsidized employment for handicapped secondary students between the ages of 17 and 22. Today, 34 districts are operating interagency programs for approximately 1200 students. Many are working with high technology employers in the urban areas.

The community shares in the responsibility for the transition from youth to adulthood, and parents can play important roles in stimulating interagency collaboration and in participating in the plans and programs that exist. The first task is to create new awareness of attitudes about handicapped persons, their needs, and their capabilities.

Hiring the Handicapped

Handicapped workers have good track records, and several studies have demonstrated their value as employees. In one survey of 125 handicapped people integrated into the work force of an American Telephone and Telegraph plant, no injuries were reported among them, they had fewer absences, and they were more productive than the general work force. A study of 1452 handicapped DuPont employees showed that these workers created no increase in workman's compensation claims; most were average or above average in matters of job safety, stability, and performance; and most required no special arrangements.

Where special arrangements are required, they are generally neither disruptive nor very expensive. The 1982 results of the first national survey of federal contractors represented 512,000 workers, of whom 19,200 were known to have handicaps. Of the accommodations made for these employees, about half cost the employers nothing, and another 30% involved expenses ranging from $1 to $500.

Nonetheless, although business and industry are good at integrating workers who become disabled after they are hired, for the most part they fall short when it comes to initially hiring handicapped workers. Therefore, the participation of representatives of business and industry in community planning and interagency linkage activities is essential in expanding employment and training activities for handicapped young people.

One approach that has been successful in business and industry is the job placement of handicapped workers along with their work-study coordinators. The coordinators supervise and assist in training handicapped workers on the job, and they also work with employers in orienting, managing, and evaluating them. In this manner, employers

gain first-hand experience with handicapped workers while simultaneously receiving assistance in integrating them into the work force.

Business and industry need more information on the handicapped as new and valuable members of the work force, on the qualifications of handicapped individuals, and on the economic wisdom of hiring the handicapped. When job preparation and employment are the goals, no partnership can be complete without the participation of employers and potential employers of handicapped individuals.

The Job Partnership Training Act

One solution may emerge from the Job Partnership Training Act, passed by Congress in 1982 and scheduled to go into effect on October 1, 1983. This Act is intended to replace and improve upon the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), and to increase the role of private business and industry in the training and employment of disadvantaged youth and adults. The CETA amendments of 1978 stated that, as a result of handicap, a person may also be economically disadvantaged. Thus, it seems probable that handicapped youth may be included in the benefits of the new law.

The Job Partnership Training Act promises a new and unique partnership between the public and private sectors. Federal funds will be directed by states to local or regional service delivery areas, each of which will have a private industry council to share overall policy and responsibility. These councils will be composed of local business leaders and officials, organized labor, rehabilitation, employment, economic development, education, and related interests. At the state level, a Job Training Coordinating Council will be appointed by the Governor to share decision-making authority; one third of the state council members will be from business and industry. These new linkages will bring public agencies and private enterprise together to plan and provide job training and employment opportunities, which have previously been almost exclusively a responsibility of the public domain.

Information about the Job Partnership Training Act is being shared by the National Alliance of Business, an independent non-profit corporation whose purpose is to increase private sector training and job opportunities for economically disadvantaged and long-term unemployed individuals. To achieve this purpose, the Alliance stimulates cooperation among private, public, governmental, labor, and community organizations across the United States.

Higher Education

In the past, handicapped high school graduates were often short-changed in the transition to college. Today, however, many colleges and universities have modified their campuses and their programs to create barrier-free environments in which handicapped students may participate in higher education. Many colleges and universities also provide adaptive technologies, materials, and services for students with handicaps. In addition, on some campuses learning disabled students who are eligible for admission may obtain continuing remedial instruction in the area of their disability.

This newfound accessibility to a college education has been stimulated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires institutions of higher education that receive federal funds to meet the educational needs of handicapped students as appropriately as the needs of non-handicapped students are met. Section 504 and Public Law 94-142 have also created greater awareness of the abilities and potentials of handicapped individuals, and federal funds have supported several projects to assist higher education in becoming more accessible to handicapped students.

The Arts

Many handicapped individuals have interests or talents in visual arts, music, drama, dance, writing, and other forms of artistic expression. Indeed, all handicapped children and youth can benefit from arts education and arts experiences, which can lead to productive use of leisure time for many and to careers for some. Arts education for handicapped students has been supported in classroom programs and art festivals across the country by The National Committee, Arts for Handicapped. At the same time, the doors of museums, symphony orchestras, theatres, and other cultural centers have begun to open to handicapped people.

Career paths are also emerging. For example, the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Worldwide is composed of 52 established handicapped artists from the United States and Europe and 76 young artists being schooled at academies and fine arts institutes at the Association's expense. Due to various handicapping conditions, none of these artists can use their hands, but they support themselves and their Association through the sale of their work, the sale of reproduction rights to paintings and sculptures, and the distribution of fine art calendars, prints, and cards.

Handicapped individuals with interest in writing can also contribute to several periodicals that feature their work. *The Disabled Writers' Quarterly* is an international literary magazine produced by physically disabled writers, and *Kaleidoscope* publishes both art and literary works of handicapped people. Both publications are operated by staffs of handicapped workers, and both also help to educate the general public on the capabilities of the handicapped.

Bridging the Gap

Although many necessary services and partnerships are missing in the handicapped individual's transition from school to adulthood, many pieces of the puzzle appear to be on the verge of coming together for the first time. In most areas of the United States, human service and educational bureaucracies have grown so large that genuine coordination of comprehensive services may be a difficult and prolonged process. This is one reason that appropriate action has been so long in coming. But this does not mean that success will be impossible. Rather, it means that success is to be achieved primarily at the community level, where parents of handicapped students can assume leadership and where educators, human service professionals, businessmen, community resource people, and handicapped men and women can come together as neighbors and colleagues to plan the best possible future for all citizens.

Resources and References

General issues expressed in this paper were reviewed in a May 1983 seminar in Scottsdale, Arizona, presented by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (Washington, D.C.) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Paris, France). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has recently published a monograph called *The Handicapped Adolescent: The Transition from School to Working Life*. The cost is $15, with a 20% discount for students. Contact OECD Publications and Information Center, Suite 1207, 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006-4582; (202) 724-1857.

Employment in the Coming Decade. Information for this section comes from "The Declining Middle," by Bob Kuttner, which appeared in the July 1983 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. A copy of this issue of the magazine should be available in your local library.

An Appropriate Public Education. The five-year evaluation study mentioned is called *The Vocational Education Study: The Final Report* (Vocational Education Study #3. Published by the National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C. 20009, this report is one of a series of studies mandated by Congress.

The topics included in the functional curriculum come from the *Teaching Research Curriculum for Mildly Handicapped Adolescents*, published in 1983 by Teaching Research, A Division of the Oregon State System of Higher Education, Monmouth, Oregon 97361, (503) 838-1220.

Interagency Collaboration. The report of interagency linkage in Lexington, Kentucky, is from an article called "Making Interagency Linkages Serve Handicapped Vocational Students," by Lloyd Tindall (University of Wisconsin), which appeared in the November 1982 issue of *Counterpoint*, the national news format publication for special education. For a complimentary copy and subscription information, contact: Counterpoint Communications Company, 750 McDonald Drive, Reno, Nevada 89503; (702) 747-7751.

For more information on the California interagency project, contact Gail C. Zittel, Office of Special Education, Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California 95814; (916) 323-4777.

Hiring the Handicapped. The first national survey of federal contractors was conducted by Mainstream, Inc., 1200 15th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 833-1136.

The Job Partnership Training Act. Substantial information was provided by James Greenan, Research and Development Coordinator, Office of Career Development for Special Populations, 345 Education Building, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois 61801; (217) 333-2325. This office is also conducting a Leadership Development Program in Vocational Special Needs Education whose purpose is to work with leadership personnel (including teachers, administrators, program coordinators, post-secondary educators, and others) to effect improvements in vocational education programs for the handicapped.

The National Alliance of Business may be reached at 1015 15th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 457-0040.

Higher Education. For a variety of information about the accessibility of colleges and universities, and about scholarship funds for handicapped students in higher education, contact the Higher Education and the Handicapped Project, HEATH Resource Center, One Dupont Circle, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 833-4707.

The Arts. The address of The National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped is 1825 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 418, Washington, D.C. 20009; (202) 332-6960.

The Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Worldwide has its office at 503 Brisbane Building, Buffalo, New York 14203.

The Disabled Writers' Quarterly originates at 2495 Major Street, St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H4M 1E5, and *Kaleidoscope* is published at 318 Water Street, Akron, Ohio 44308.

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With this newsletter, The National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth is inaugurating a two-way flow of information with you, the concerned people in communities across America. Let us know about the projects you are developing, the progress you are making, and the good things that are happening in services for the handicapped where you live. If we can hear from you, we can share your information with many others who will find it useful and, of course, we will give full credit to the originators. Address your responses to: Toni Haas, Director, The National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth, 1555 North Wilson Boulevard, Suite 508, Rosslyn, Virginia 22209.